

What is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) results from exposure to psychological trauma including combat, sexual assault, or other life-threatening events and is one of the most common mental health conditions in American society. Symptoms include:

- Painful dreams/memories of traumatic events
- Intense anxiety/depression
- Disturbed sleep
- Suicidal/hostile impulses
- Difficulty getting close to others
- Numbing of emotions
- Social isolation
- Trouble working or finding meaningful activities

Approximately 830,000 Vietnam veterans have significant symptoms of PTSD. About 8% of Gulf War veterans have experienced PTSD, and veterans held as prisoners of war during WWII and the Korean Conflict may have PTSD in the 40-75% range. Sexual assault is a particularly traumatic experience, and may produce PTSD in 30-75% of victims. Traumatic incidents such as the September 11th attack on the U.S. may also result in PTSD for survivors.

For many with PTSD, the passage of time alone does not heal the wounds of trauma. The natural desire to withdraw from others and not talk about problems related to traumatic experiences may make

matters worse. Treatment that emphasizes counseling, medications, & support services are designed to identify and assess emotional, social, and physical health problems and reduce the frequency and intensity of events and symptoms.

PTSD Programs:

- Inpatient Program (PIP), Seattle Division: intensive inpatient program addressing severe PTSD symptoms.
- Outpatient Clinic (POC), American Lake and Seattle: long-term treatment program of weekly group, individual, and/or couples therapy sessions.
- Women's Trauma Recovery Program (WTRP): designed specifically for female veterans exposed to military-related trauma/sexual assault. Individual and/or group therapy available. Clinical activities are distinct from the men's POC, and are provided by female staff members.
- Residential (PRU), American Lake division: domiciliary-style residential facility focusing on veterans with PTSD who are homeless or have substandard housing.

For more information, call the PTSD Program Triage Coordinator: American Lake (253)-582-8440, extension 6-6460, or Seattle (206) 768-5365. Veterans may also report to the Psychiatric Emergency Services for brief evaluation and referral to one of the PTSD treatment programs.

COO Comments

In this newsletter you will find an article on how the budget process flows from Congress to our Network and facility; you may also asking; "What is our budget going to look like for Fiscal Year 2002 (starting October 2001), and how will that affect what we do at VA Puget Sound Health Care System?"



*Sandy J Nielsen
Chief Operations
Officer*

The real answer is that we don't know yet. As of this writing, Congress has not agreed on a VA budget for FY 2002 and very often we do not know our actual budget numbers until November or December. What that means is that we have to do our planning based on the budget proposal submitted by the President, even though this is often modified by Congress.

What we know so far is that FY 2002 looks like it could be a lean year for our Network, and an even leaner year for many other VISNs. The worst case scenario is that we may need to trim our workforce by leaving some vacancies open longer than we might otherwise choose. We probably have some leeway to do this, since we have about 150 more staff on hand now than we did a year ago at this time. We have been meeting individually with Service Line Leaders to discuss budget projections for next year and to identify additional ways of working more cost effectively. We will be working hard to increase our insurance billing, since that is one way that we can bring additional income to the facility. In FY 2001 those

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Quality in Action

Quality

Telemedicine Saves Time

Veterans living in the Northwest can save time, gas, money and traffic-induced-aggravation by visiting with their providers by Telemedicine for certain medical appointments. Telemedicine is one way to provide increased access to veterans across vast distances. In one of the newest initiatives, video conferencing equipment was installed at the Mental Healthcare Service in Seattle and at the Veteran's Outreach Center in Bellingham. Patients and healthcare providers are connected through a secure private network and view each other as if on TV! It is anticipated that additional 250-300 patients will be served as a result of this innovative project. Other potential uses of these systems include PTSD, psychology & social worker appointments, meetings with caseworkers from the homeless program, patient education and staff training.

Other VA Puget Sound telemedicine programs include Multidisciplinary Cancer Education Conference and Tumor Board case conferencing, Cardiology Catheterization conference; Dermatology consultation, Spinal Cord Injury case conferencing and Homecare monitoring and Geriatrics Specialty Care for the State Veteran's Homes in Orting and Retsil. For more information contact Claudia Zink, Telemedicine Coordinator Northern Alliance, VISN 20 at (206) 277-6259.

May We Help You?



"A much needed service" remarked several patients and visitors as they stopped at the new patient information counter located in building 1, across from the elevators at the Seattle division. "This is a great service", stated one veteran; "I was late for my appointment and they called the clinic for me." The smiling faces behind the counter belong to VA volunteers including Gene Bartol, who noted, "Helping the veterans with directions, scheduled appointment questions, and patient escort is our business."

Depression Education Class

In a collaborative endeavor, MHC and GIMC will be providing a Depression Education Class. Any patient is welcome to attend this once a month class. No pre-enrollment is necessary.

Depression Education Class
12:30 pm - 2:00 pm
the 2nd Tues of each month
The first class will be held on 10/9/01.
Building 1, Room 161

For more information, contact:
Linda Gillespie-Gateley, MSW
(206) 768-5474
Mary Lou McClure, RN
(206) 764-2874
Wayne Williams, MSW
(206) 768-5494

Continuous Readiness

Over the past two years we have been committed to a goal of continuous readiness at VA Puget Sound Health Care System and throughout VISN 20, the VA Northwest Health Network. Continuous readiness means that every day we provide high quality care and that we are ready for any external agency to visit us. The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) will be visiting us in October. JCAHO will be looking at us as an individual facility for accreditation and in addition, will conduct a Network Accreditation survey of VISN 20 to see how well we have progressed towards becoming an integrated health care delivery network.

Canteen Service Rates Top Score

The Canteen Service recently received a Quality Award for Excellence in individual and team effort by moving "beyond customer expectations". To receive this award, the canteen's financial results had to be in the top 30% in the nation. Last year, VA Puget Sound Seattle division canteen ranked #3 in the nation. Congratulations!

PTSD

The Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Program

Research is a critical function of the PTSD program exploring the causes of PTSD, the best treatments and practices.

Biology of PTSD – examines stress hormones PTSD's affect. Researchers are looking at abnormal stress hormone levels and genetic (inherited) factors in patients with PTSD.

Treatment of PTSD – targets medications and/or counseling for specific symptoms of PTSD. Research includes treatment of nightmares by regulating adrenaline in the nervous system; development of specialized

group therapy programs for African-American veterans; determination of the relationship between PTSD symptoms and alcohol abuse/nicotine dependence.

Health Needs of Women Veterans – women veterans frequently suffer from PTSD as a result of sexual assault or duties performed in a war zone. Mental and physical health care needs of traumatized women veterans; effective screening tools for diagnosing PTSD; and safety/self-defense skills for traumatized patients is stressed.

Needs of Gulf War Veterans – PTSD and multiple physical symptoms are distressing problems for many Gulf War veterans. Current studies examine the role of exercise, psychotherapy, and medical-mental health care.

For more information about the PTSD Research contact Dr. Miles McFall, (206) 764-2177.

Project Combine National Alcohol Study

Alcoholism costs America 100,000 lives and impacts over 8 million dependent adults at a cost of \$185 billion each year. A patient being treated for the consequences of alcoholism occupies one in four beds in urban hospitals across the country.

Our Addictions Treatment Center, in collaboration with the University of Washington, Yale and Harvard universities, and the NIH, are part of an eleven site national study exploring the effectiveness of medication along with behavioral treatment for alcohol dependence. VA Puget Sound was recently featured in a Seattle Times story on the study. For more information call (206) 277-5086 or 1-866-8COMBINE.

SELECT Study Targets Prostate Cancer

Healthy men age 55 and older are needed for the largest-ever national prostate cancer prevention study, launched by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in conjunction with 38 VA medical centers across the country. The Selenium and Vitamin E Cancer Prevention Trial, or SELECT, seeks to learn if these two supplements can protect against prostate cancer, the most common form of cancer, after skin cancer, in men. As part of this study, VA Puget Sound will recruit veterans from throughout the region and the Northern Alliance, which includes Washington, Alaska and Idaho. The study will include a total of 32,400 men, and will take up to 12 years to complete.

Men may be able to participate in SELECT if they:

- Are age 55 or older; age 50 or older for African American men
- Have never had prostate cancer and have not had any other cancer, except non-melanoma skin cancer, in the last five years and are generally in good health
- Men interested in joining the study can call the SELECT study office at VA Puget Sound Health Care System at (206) 768-5283.

IN THE NEWS

VISN 20 Applies for Malcolm Baldrige

National Quality Award

For the past two years VISN 20, the VA Northwest Health Network, has been the proud recipient of the Kenneth W. Kizer Quality Achievement Recognition Grant award. This VA award is based upon the Baldrige Health Care Criteria for Performance Excellence. VISN 20 recently applied for the 2001 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Competition is nation-wide and includes private and public-sector applicants, site visits are pending. The Veterans Health Administration plans to submit a Baldrige application for the entire national VA health care system in 2002.

Malcolm Baldrige was U.S. Secretary of Commerce from 1981 until his death in July 1987, and was a proponent of quality management. Congress established the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in 1987 and is given to organizations that demonstrate quality performance in manufacturing, service, small business or healthcare. Only 41 companies have received the Baldrige award. Past recipients include the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, Sollectron Corporation, Sunny Fresh Foods, FedEx, and Motorola.

The Baldrige criteria includes seven categories to improve overall organizational performance:

- Leadership;
- Strategic Planning;
- Customer and Market Focus;
- Information and Analysis;
- Human Resource Focus;
- Process Management; and
- Business Results.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is an extreme form of the winter blahs that may bring you crying spells, lethargy, fatigue, irritability, anxiety, cravings for sweets and starches, headaches, difficulty concentrating and processing information, and sleep problems.

Light therapy is the most common treatment during winter. In light therapy, you sit a few feet away from a special lamp that's 10 to 20 times brighter than ordinary indoor lights for about 30 minutes each day. Antidepressant medication and psychotherapy may also be used.

Self-care lifestyle changes may help better manage SAD:

- Increase the amount of light in your home. Add lamps or skylights.
- Walk outdoors on sunny days, even during winter.
- If possible, take winter vacations in a sunny, warm location.
- Exercise regularly. Physical exercise helps relieve stress and anxiety, which can accentuate SAD.
- Experiment with sleeping less and eating fewer carbohydrates. Eating too many carbohydrates raises your blood sugar level and makes you feel sleepy.
- Learn ways to manage stress.

For more information, check the following website:
<http://www.mentalhealth.com/book/p40-sad.html>

Information Security Awareness

VA Puget Sound takes Information Security seriously as part of our health care delivery. Our patients, employees, volunteers and partners have a right to expect that we will maintain confidentiality and integrity when we process and access information/data. It is the responsibility of every person at the VA to deliver on that promise.

To that end, Information Security education begins the first day any employee or volunteer begins working here. Individuals receive general and job specific information security training. This training is continued annually for each employee using computer systems and databases.

Puget Sound is currently running an Information Security Awareness Campaign using e-mail, banners, bulletins, and posters that help us keep our focus on Information Security. Keep an eye out for those posters - see if you recognize them!

New Chief of Surgery Announced

VA Puget Sound is pleased to announce that Dr. Michael Sobel was appointed as Chief of Surgery. Dr. Sobel comes to us from the Syracuse VA Medical Center and was Professor of Surgery at the Health Sciences Center, State University of New York, Syracuse, where he was also the Chief of the Vascular Surgery Section. Welcome aboard and welcome to the Pacific Northwest!

Veterans Outreach *Clothing Program*



Charlie Street
Mark Sakura

It is estimated that 30% of the homeless identify themselves as veterans. For many the economic struggle for independence is fought daily, often leaving few financial resources for clothing or other essential items. The recently opened Veteran's Outreach Clothing Program is designed to help homeless veterans and extend a hand to any veteran who expresses a need for assistance, and has served over 1785 veterans since May. Through the generosity of donors, clothing has been supplied to representatives and organizations serving veterans in remote areas of our region. The immediate focus will be on collecting warm coats and backpacks. Items that are continually in short supply include: tee shirts, underwear, socks, sweatpants and sweatshirts, as well as blue jeans. All donations must be cleaned and in good condition. Donations can be dropped off at the clothing room daily between 9:30 am and 3:00 pm Monday - Friday or delivered to the Social Work administrative offices located in Building 1/second floor.

For more information call (206) 277-4366 or Ext. 6-4366.

Center for Education & Development

receives rare CME Accreditation

The Center for Education and Development is pleased to announce that VA Puget Sound Health Care System has been surveyed by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) and has awarded us a two year accreditation as a provider of continuing medical education for physicians. ACCME is a rigorous evaluation and it is rare for a hospital/health system to earn accreditation. VA Puget Sound will be able to provide official Continuing Medical Education credits on site, which until now had to be done through a regional education and training center in Boise.

For more information contact Deidra McLauchlan, CME Program Coordinator at ext. 71597 or Dr. Phillip Rakestraw at ext. 61400.

Selection Announced...

W. Paul Nichol, M.D. has been appointed Associate Chief Medical Officer for Clinical Information Management for VA Puget Sound Health Care System. Dr. Nichol was the Director of Primary Care Services, VA Puget Sound. Dr. Nichol has been at VA Puget Sound since 1989 as the Associate Chief of Staff for Ambulatory Care and Director of Primary Care Services. Dr. Nichol is Board Certified in both Internal Medicine and Geriatric Medicine and is Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at University of Washington.

Jacoby Award

Dr. Bird of GRECC received the George W. Jacoby Award from the American Neurological at the association's 126th annual meeting in Chicago, IL. The Jacoby Award is presented every third year recognizing meritorious experimental work in the field. Dr. Bird was honored for his investigations of genetic factors in Alzheimer disease and other dementias, as well as a variety of hereditary neurological disorders.

Outstanding Citizen of the Year

The Seattle Police Department recognized one of VA Puget Sound's facilities maintenance employees, Richard Wildermuth, with an Outstanding Citizen of the Year Award. This award was originated and first presented this year to recognize individuals providing assistance to the Seattle Police Department. Richard is also active with AFGE Local 1397. Congratulations Richard!

Willie Lollie

At age 18, Willie Lollie had just graduated from Franklin High School in Seattle. He recalled close friends, dreams of finding a career, getting married and having a family. However, in 1967 he was drafted into the Army and sent to Vietnam from 1968-69. His reflections on his Vietnam combat experience appear vivid. At home another war was raging, Martin Luther King had just been assassinated. In combat, everyone fought together, but during “down” times the African American veterans would often get together for camaraderie.

Lollie came to the VA in the early 70's, but at that time there was no PTSD treatment program. He had difficulty trying to “fit” back into the life he knew and found himself more and more isolated. He had nightmares, angry outbursts and sometimes locked himself in his room. He had trouble acknowledging there was something wrong and he could see no way to stop the frightful memories. His PTSD elevated after he experienced two incidences of violence while working as a driver for Metro Bus System. Friends told him they were getting help at the VA. He found individual and group therapy treatment at VA Puget Sound with Murray Raskind, MD, Director of the Mental Health Service.

Asked how PTSD treatment has helped him, he noted that the group provides comfort and encouragement. “Even though your loved ones really care about you, they still can’t understand like someone who has been through it. There is such a difference when you see people (staff and veterans) honestly helping you with actions, not just words. I realize that I am not alone”.



Willie Lollie

Krista Wohlfeil

In 1992 when Krista Wohlfeil volunteered for her second tour of duty, it was relatively peaceful in Mogi Dishu, Somalia. Fighting erupted days before her arrival and her first and lasting vision was of smoke rising from the city accompanied by sounds of mortar fire just outside their compound the first night. For eight months she was the driver for the officers visiting refugee camps, hospitals, and orphanages. Gunfire often came close to the jeep and the fighting was constant. When she visited the orphanages, she would stuff her pockets with small gifts for the children, temporarily easing the stresses of the war around her. Her next tour of duty was scheduled for Turkey and then Bosnia, where more fighting ensued. Wohlfeil chose not to continue her tour.

A military physician saw her for “shell shock” only to be told, “Women don’t see combat and therefore can’t have shell shock”.

Over the next five years the memories persisted, and her attempts to suppress them resulted in increasing anxiety and depression, causing her to be fearful, to be alone and experience difficulty driving. She first sought treatment at the VA in New York, and after moving to Seattle, she sought treatment from the Women’s PTSD program at VA Puget Sound. The program has helped her to deal with feelings of anger, rage and fear.



Krista Wohlfeil

As she began to feel better, she also learned “not to set timelines” on her progress. She said, “It is helping me win back my life!”

Veterans Day Program 2001

American Lake division

Friday
November 9th
1:30 pm
Building 9, Auditorium

Seattle division

Wednesday
November 9th
1:30 pm
BB-108

(COO Comments continued from page 1)

efforts provided us with over \$8.7 million that we can use towards operating costs. We will also be asking all of you to continue your efforts to conserve energy and other resources in an effort to reduce our costs.

All of you have contributed to making the VA Puget Sound Health Care System one of the most cost-efficient health care providers in the entire VA system. We can go confidently into this year because we know that whatever develops, our staff have shown that they have the ability to adapt and to rise to new challenges.

Budget Sense

the allocation process



The Department of Veterans Affairs is the second largest cabinet level agency following the Department of Defense; but have you ever wondered how the VA gets its funding? Have you ever tried to explain the funding process to someone?

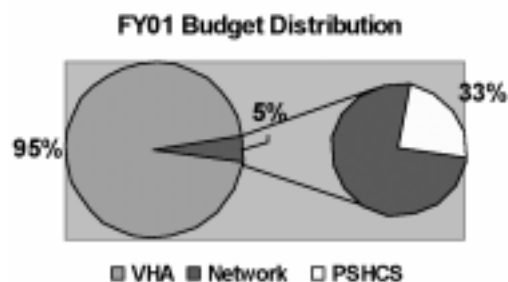
In February the President, with consultation from the all Department Secretaries, submits his budget request to Congress. The President's budget request includes an amount identified for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). VHA is organized into 22 networks called Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISN's). Our network, VISN 20, has eight facilities: Anchorage, Boise, Portland, Puget Sound, Roseburg, Spokane, Walla Walla, and White City.

For last fiscal year (Oct. 2000 through Sept. 2001) the VHA budget was \$20 billion. VHA nationally allocates this budget by assigning an allotment of dollars to each network based on the number and types of patients treated. VHA collected and analyzed data on all patients treated VA-wide during the past fiscal year and allocated them into two classes: basic care and complex care. The latter group is essentially those patients who have complex treatment needs and therefore cost more to treat. Last fiscal year, each network received \$42,765 for each complex care patient and \$3,126 for each basic care patient. The number of patients that were funded was determined by looking at the historical trends in each network.

Using the above formula, our network received \$765 million for fiscal year 2001. The network allotted most of these funds among the network facilities based on the historical basis of prior hospital level funding. For example, VA Puget Sound received \$235 million last year, and we received that base this year plus four percent (\$9 million) for inflation and pay raises. The network has also provided additional funds (\$5 million) to VA Puget Sound to increase the number of patients treated. So the total FY01 budget for our facility was approximately \$249 million. VHA sends funds to each network based on the number of patients treated and on the complexity of care provided. Our network provides most funding based on historical funding levels and also assigns funds for increased workload.

VA Puget Sound's budget allocation process is straightforward. We divide expenses into two categories, salaries and operating supplies. Each summer we meet with each service line leader to discuss their needs in these categories for the upcoming fiscal year that starts in October. In late summer we usually receive our budget from the network. After comparing our assigned budget to the needs of the service lines, we can then decide whether we have additional funds to expand services or whether we must look to curtail some services to balance the budget.

Year to year variation in congressional funding makes long term planning a challenge. Our goal is to maintain a relatively stable budget climate to allow our employees to perform at their best, and to be successful.



Jefferson Park Site Planning

Over the next few years a large number of City of Seattle projects are slated to be constructed in Jefferson Park. To ensure that these projects are carried out in the best possible manner, the Seattle Parks Department is coordinating a site planning process, with extensive public involvement.

A Project Advisory Team (PAT) comprised of representatives of over 20 key Jefferson Park stakeholder groups has been appointed by the Superintendent. Ed Boogaerts, Project Engineer, represents VA Puget Sound. The PAT is intended to facilitate stakeholder participation. They will review and provide recommendations on the development of the Jefferson Park site plan. Meetings of the PAT are open to the public and are scheduled for third Tuesday's of each month through November, 7:00-9:00 p.m. at Jefferson Park Lawn Bowling Clubhouse. At its meetings the PAT will review project scope, budget, schedule, recent accomplishments, and upcoming tasks. Recommendations of the PAT will be given substantial weight by the Parks Department. The PAT's work will be finished when the plan is approved by the City Council. Meeting agendas and minutes will be available at this web address: <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkspaces/jeffparkagendas.htm>.



September 11th, 2001



Take Pride in Our Values and the
Uniquely American Resolve that will Carry Our
Country Through this Tragedy.

It's CFC Time Again...

VA Puget Sound employees went over the top last year - let's see if we can repeat our success again this year! The 2001 Combined Federal Campaign will run from the beginning of October to mid-November. From youth organizations to shelters for battered women and children to national and local disaster relief, most of us know someone who has benefited from services provided by these agencies. Employees may select as many organizations as they wish to support. VA Puget Sound supports both Pierce and King County campaigns. For more information, call Rita Gregory, ext. 7-1588, Dorothy Inocentes, ext. 7-6592 at American Lake or Cathy Clough at ext. 6-1340 or Dan Longosky at ext. 6-2649 in Seattle.



Puget Sound Health Care System American Lake & Seattle

VA Puget Sound News is published quarterly, each autumn, winter, spring and summer by the Office of Public Affairs. VA Puget Sound Health Care System proudly serves veterans throughout the Northwest with facilities located in Seattle and at American Lake. VA Puget Sound is part of the VISN 20 network of health care facilities.

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